



Neighborhood Networks Success Stories

We Care Center, Virginia Beach, VA

Five years ago, when FBI Special Agent Richard "Butch" Holtz and his colleagues at the Norfolk FBI office began volunteering at the Neighborhood Networks center at Friendship Village Apartments in Virginia Beach, Va., they knew challenges lay ahead.

For years, crime, drug abuse, gangs and violence were rampant at Friendship Village. The risks to personal safety caused many residents to stay in their apartments, leaving them feeling isolated from their community and unable to take advantage of outside opportunity.

But the community decided to fight back. They sought help from the Virginia Beach Police Department and they supported the opening of We Care Center.

Holtz and his colleagues joined the Friendship Village improvement effort—not in a law-enforcement capacity—but as volunteer instructors and mentors in the FBI's Community Outreach Program, working with the property's more than 100 children and adults. In two-hour sessions, three times a week at the We Care Center, FBI instructors teach residents keyboarding, word processing, database and spreadsheet development and important job search techniques.

Holtz, who spearheaded the partnership between the FBI and Neighborhood Networks, was honored by HUD in Oct. 2000 for his community service in helping bridge the "digital divide"—the gap in information-technology accessibility, computer literacy and Internet connectivity between some U.S. neighborhoods and communities and most others—for low-income residents.

HUD also recognized Brian Callahan, vice president of computer and online services at WHRO-TV, who led the public television station's efforts to provide the We Care Center Internet services and access to technology and education training sessions.

The awards were given as part of National Neighborhood Networks Week, a weeklong celebration marking five years of successfully helping residents of HUD properties move toward self-sufficiency. National Neighborhood Networks Week, Oct. 14-22, 2000 celebrated the theme "Conquering the Digital Divide: Delivering the Promise of Technology to America's Families."

HUD, the FBI field office and the law enforcement community hope to use the Norfolk effort as a model for building other successful partnerships with Neighborhood Networks centers across the country.

For more information, contact:

Saulo Ortiz
Program Coordinator
We Care Center
1235 Friendship Square
Virginia Beach, VA 23451
Phone: (757) 425-9325

Richard D. Warren
U.S. Department of HUD—Richmond Office
3600 West Broad Street
Richmond, VA 23230-0331
Phone: (804) 278-4500, ext. 3019

**For more information about how
Neighborhood Networks centers
are helping property owners and
managers succeed, please call the
Neighborhood Networks
information center at
1-888-312-2743.**

Visit our Web site at www.NeighborhoodNetworks.org



Neighborhood Networks Success Stories

Neighborhood Networks Centers Proving Their Value to HUD Property Owners and Managers

The following are examples of HUD property owners and managers who discovered the asset value of a Neighborhood Networks center. HUD property owners and managers report Neighborhood Networks centers help lower vacancy rates, reduce crime and improve the bottom line.

Villa D'Ames Apartments, Marrero, La.

Villa D'Ames Apartments in Marrero, La., is a HUD Section 8 property where the average household income is about \$6,034. Drugs, unemployment, lack of transportation, lack of education and hopelessness once prevailed. Property owner and manager Christopher Homes, part of the Archdiocese of New Orleans, opened the Villa D'Ames Learning Center in 1996. The move contributed to increased rent payments; enabled residents to secure higher-paying jobs; lowered the property's vacancy rate; lowered maintenance and repair costs related to vandalism and negligence and created a positive sense of "community" among residents.

For more information, contact:

Thomas Perkins
Christopher Homes
Phone: (504) 596-3460

Cheryl G. Wheeler
U.S. Department of HUD—New Orleans Office
Phone: (504) 589-7236

Pedestal Gardens Neighborhood Networks Center, Baltimore, MD

Interstate Realty Management Company transformed a residential unit in Baltimore into the Pedestal Gardens Neighborhood Networks Computer Training Center in 1997. The success of the center—which offers welfare-to-work and basic skills training—allowed the property to launch an active crime watch program and an organized resident association.

For more information, contact:

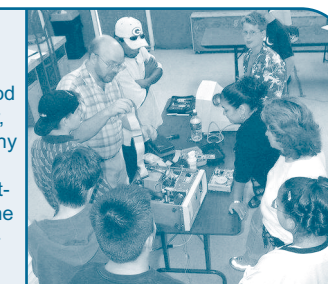
Charles Durnin
Interstate Realty Management
Phone: (856) 956-0500

Charles Wilson
U.S. Department of HUD—Baltimore Office
Phone: (410) 962-2520, ext. 3114

Grove Neighborhood Network, Greeley, Colo.

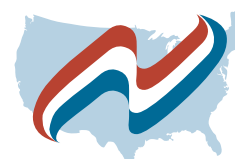
Richard Maxfield, property manager of the Island Grove Village Apartments in Greeley, Colo., which houses the Grove Neighborhood Network, applied for and received a HUD drug elimination grant.

**Building for the
Future.** At The
Grove Neighborhood
Network in Greeley,
Colo., the philosophy
is that the best
access to a comput-
er is when it is in the
home. To help resi-
dents obtain their
own computer, the
center has a computer
assembly class. Instructor Dave
Helmer (left) leads a recent class.



Maxfield used the grant to build partnerships with the local police, youth organizations and nearby properties. He also used it to enhance security lighting. Youth involvement in evening activities multiplied after the lighting was installed and the partnership with the local police was formed, according to Maxfield. He added that crime reports decreased dramatically.

A U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development Initiative





Neighborhood Networks Success Stories

For more information, contact:

Richard Maxfield
Island Grove Village Apartments
Phone: (970) 304-9636

Deanna E. Beaudoin
U.S. Department of HUD—Denver Office
Phone: (303) 672-5343, ext. 1142

Sandia Vista Neighborhood Networks Center, Albuquerque, NM

The Sandia Vista property in Albuquerque, N.M., opened a Neighborhood Networks center within its apartment complex. After receiving a 1999 HUD Drug Elimination Grant, the center launched an extensive four-pronged plan called Project FOCUS to reduce drug- and gang-related activities on the property. Through the efforts of residents, management and many partnering organizations, Project FOCUS helped decrease by 60 percent the number of telephone calls made by residents living at the Sandia Vista property to the Albuquerque Police Department.

For more information, contact:

Andrew Silva
Sandia Vista
Phone: (505) 260-4800

Barbara C. Connerley
U.S. Department of HUD—Albuquerque Office
Phone: (505) 346-7365

Wheatland Terrace Community Learning Centers, Dallas, Tx.

Crime, violence and drug abuse were rampant at Wheatland Terrace Apartments in Dallas and its four neighboring properties. In 1996, the Texas HUD Office placed Wheatland Terrace in disposition and began renovating the 296-unit property. After major change, security enhancements and development of a Neighborhood Networks center, the community is now taking pride in maintaining a safe living environment. The Wheatland Terrace Community Learning Center has helped residents acquire job skills, employment, and a renewed sense of self-confidence, hope and community spirit. The center offers residents the opportunity to become economically self-sufficient by providing computer classes, office and life skills training, job placement assistance and child care services.

For more information, contact:

Kim Williams
Wheatland Terrace
Phone: (972) 224-5243

Vernon Butler
U.S. Department of HUD—Fort Worth Office
Phone: (817) 978-5769

Cherrydale Neighborhood Networks Center, Baltimore, MD

As part of a \$3.8 million revitalization at Cherrydale Apartments in Baltimore, a new Neighborhood Networks center opened, offering computer job training, Internet access, health care services and microenterprise devel-



Say, Ahhhhh. Neighborhood Networks' partnership with the Bureau of Primary Health Care has benefited center residents across the country including Kayla Dillard from the Cherrydale Neighborhood Networks Center in Baltimore.

opment for youth and residents of the 186-unit housing development. Cornerstone/Cherrydale, Inc., which owns the property, received a \$7.6 million preservation grant from HUD for the acquisition and rehabilitation.

Construction on Cherrydale Apartments began in December 1997 and was completed January 1999.

Physical improvements

to the property include: replacement of roofs, windows and doors; upgrading the heating; improving the grounds; repainting of all units; installing air conditioning, wall-to-wall carpeting, cabinets, fencing and security entry; and development of the Neighborhood Networks center. During the construction period, residents formed a health and safety committee and several neighborhood watch groups and activities (Citizens on Patrol, Neighbors Night Out and Safe Space Walkers) to improve safety and reduce crime in the Cherrydale Apartments community.

For more information, contact:

Martha Distence
Cherrydale Apartments
Phone: (410) 355-1040

Charles Wilson
U.S. Department of HUD—Baltimore Office
Phone: (410) 962-2520, ext. 3114

CommonBond Neighborhood Networks Centers, Minneapolis, MN

CommonBond owns and manages 2,300 affordable rental housing units throughout the Minneapolis-St. Paul region, and has combined its expertise in the housing arena with services in job training and related fields. The services CommonBond offers through its eight Neighborhood Networks centers include job readiness, training, placement, and retention services, English as a Second Language (ESL) and citizenship courses, computing courses and educational programs for youth. Other service offerings include health care and courses in household financial management. With help from CommonBond and its Advantage Centers, more than 60 residents have found full-time employment, 19 residents have become first-time homebuyers and 72 residents have relocated to market-rate housing.

For more information, contact:

Scott Beckman
CommonBond
Phone: (651) 291-1750

June Trask
U.S. Department of HUD—Minneapolis Office
Phone: (612) 370-3020

Lutheran Social Services Neighborhood Networks Computer Center, Jamestown, NY

Lutheran Social Services of Jamestown, New York, manages the LSS Neighborhood Networks Computer Center for the 176 senior residents of its five affordable housing developments. The center's goals coincide with special senior needs and include increasing social opportunities with friends and family, cultivating lifelong learning, fostering self-expression, and providing recreation and telecommuting opportunities. Courses in word processing, graphic design, genealogy, multimedia and spreadsheet and database applications routinely are taught at the center. The classes have enabled the residents to produce newsletters, cookbooks, genealogies and autobiographies for the public.

What Property Owners and Managers Are Saying About Neighborhood Networks...

One property owner describes Neighborhood Networks centers as the "best life preserver for your equity." As entitlement programs go away, he says, owners must attract residents who are interested in earning their own living if owners want the property to survive.

"I haven't done any statistical research, but my gut is that [the center] has given people an opportunity to improve their skills. It's a calling card," said Ralph Johnson, a regional director for Westmark Management Co., which manages property for Villa Americana Associates, Ltd.

"To a management company, a Neighborhood Networks center enhances our ability to market our properties and our corporate profile," said Jacqueline Jones, director of social services at Interstate Reality Management Company.

For more information, contact:

Sharon Hamilton
Lutheran Social Services
Phone: (716) 665-8197

Yvonne Harris
U.S. Department of HUD—Buffalo Office
Phone: (716) 551-5755, ext. 5506

Parker Square Neighborhood Networks Computer Learning Center Kansas City, Mo.

In Kansas City, Mo., the Parker Square Computer Learning Center—located inside the Parker Square Apartments—has been helping residents develop skills and find jobs ever since it opened its doors in September 1996. One resident completed his training at the Neighborhood Networks Center at Parker Square and began a career as a licensed realtor. Another resident at the 204-unit property finished her training at the center and became a cosmetologist. The property also is working closely with four public housing and five HUD-assisted properties in the area to combat crime and improve community safety.

For more information, contact:

Frankie Lewis
Parker Square
Phone: (816) 842-0930

Patricia Micksa
U.S. Department of HUD—St. Louis Office
Phone: (314) 539-6734

Visit our Web site at www.NeighborhoodNetworks.org

